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[Heber, Reginald, Bp of Calcutta]

NOAH'S CARPENTERS.

It was a late hour at night. The City of N——, with its many turrets and spires, was sleeping under the shadow of those rocky sentinels which have guarded the plain since the flood. The waves of the ocean fell gently and soothingly on the beach. The moon waded through the fleecy autumn clouds, now playing with the waters and lighting up the scene, and then concealing her glory, as if to make its revelations more prized. It was a night for pious thoughts and conversation.

Two persons were leaving the city and passing along the water-side to a beautiful valley, where one was a resident and the other a guest. The taller, the elder of the two, was actively engaged in a work of benevolence, in the blessings of which the people of N—— and the students of —— college mutually shared. The work was *too heavy* for him, and he had invited his young friend, an impenitent lad, of whom we will speak as Henry, to aid him. Together they had spent many a weary day in supplying the Christian laborers who co-operated with them in the choicest means of usefulness, as they crowded the depository of truth. Exhausted by their toils, they were now returning for a night's repose. Hitherto, not a word had been addressed to the obliging lad about his soul. The fitting occasion seemed to have arrived. A quaint but fitting manner was chosen.

"Henry," asked the elder of the younger, "do you know what became of Noah's carpenters?"

"Noah's carpenters!" exclaimed Henry; "I did n't know that Noah had any carpenters."

"Certainly he must have had help in building one of the largest and best-proportioned ships ever put upon the stocks. There must have been many ship-carpenters at work for a long time, to have constructed such a vessel in such an age. What became of them, think you,

when all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened?"

"What do you mean by such a queer question?" Henry replied.

"No matter what, just now. Please answer the inquiry. And you may also tell me if you will, what you would have done in that dreadful hour, when the storm came in its fury, and Noah's prophecies were all fulfilled, and all but the family of the preacher of righteousness were ready to be engulfed in those black waters?"

"I don't know," said Henry, in a half thoughtful, half trifling manner; "perhaps I should have got on the rudder!"

"This is human nature exactly, Henry. It would 'climb up some other way,' rather than enter the fold by the only door. It would 'get on the rudder,' in its pride and shortsightedness, rather than go into the ark of safety. It would 'save itself,' by hanging on at the hazard of being swept into the gulf of despair, instead of being saved by the provision of infinite love.

"But I'll tell you plainly what I mean, Henry, by Noah's carpenters. You have kindly and generously given me your aid day after day, in building an ark in N——, by which many, I trust, will be saved. I feel grateful for your help. But I greatly fear that while others will be rejoicing in the fruits of our labors, you will be swept away in the storm of wrath which will by and by beat on the heads of those who enter not the ark of Jesus Christ. No human device will avail for you. 'Getting on the rudder' will not answer; you must be in Christ, or you are lost. Remember Noah's Carpenters, and flee to the ark without delay."

We reached the house and parted. The winter came. The lad was placed at a boarding-school in ——. He visited home during the winter vacation, and presented himself to the church for admission to its communion. He then stated that the conversation detailed above had never passed from his memory. It led him to serious reflections, and ultimately, we trust, to the ark of safety. He is now entering a career of wide-spread public usefulness. He will never forget Noah's carpenters.

Though Noah's carpenters were all drowned, there are a great many of the same stock now alive; of those who contribute to promote the spiritual good of others, and aid in the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom, but personally neglect the great salvation.

Sabbath-school children, who gather in the poor or contribute their money to send tracts and books to the destitute, or to aid in the work of missions, and yet remain unconverted, are like Noah's carpenters.

Teachers in Bible-classes and Sabbath-schools, who point their pupils to the Lamb of God, but do not lead the way, are like guide-boards that tell the road, but are not travellers on it; or like Noah's carpenters, who built an ark, and were overwhelmed in the waters that bore it aloft in safety.

Careless parents, who instruct their children and servants, as every parent should, in the great doctrines of the gospel, yet fail to illustrate these doctrines in their lives, and seek not a personal interest in the blood of Christ, are like Noah's carpenters, and must expect their doom.

Printers, sewers, folders and binders, engaged in making Bibles and religious books, book-sellers and publishers of religious newspapers, who are doing much to increase the knowledge of the gospel and to save souls, but so many of whom are careless about their own salvation, will have the mortification of knowing, that while their toils have been instrumental of spiritual good to thousands, they were only the pack-mules that carried a load to market without tasting it, or like Noah's carpenters, who built a ship they never sailed.

Wealthy and liberal, but unconverted men, who help to build churches and sustain the institutions of the gospel, but who "will not come unto Christ that they may have life," are hewing the timbers and driving the nails of the ark which they are too proud or too careless to enter. Perhaps they think they will be safe on the "rudder;" but they may find too late that when they would ride they must swim—that when they would float they must sink, with all their good deeds unmixed with faith as a mill-stone about their necks.

Moralists who attend church and support the ministry,

but who do not receive into their hearts the gospel they thus sustain, are like Noah's carpenters.

The noble soldier who risks his life in the defence of his country, who gives of his pay to scatter the word of truth—who even distributes these tracts among his comrades, may, in the end, lose his own immortal soul; and, like Noah's carpenters, drown beside the ark he assisted in building. *Don't forget Noah's carpenters.*

Perhaps the Christian reader will be encouraged by this narrative to speak a word in season to some of these ark-builders. Their kindness should be acknowledged. "These things ought they to have done." The danger is, that the great thing will be left undone. Run, speak to that young man. Tell him that the storm of wrath will come. Tell him that "getting on the rudder" of the ark, and all other human devices for salvation, are vain refuges of lies. Tell him that the ark is open—that it is safe—that it waits for him. The dove and the olive branch are in this ark. The bow of mercy spans the heavens above it. Peace, and hope, and salvation are there. But, if scorned or neglected, when once the door is shut, they only that are in the ark will "remain alive." Who can abide that storm? Who can buffet those waves? Who will survive that deluge?

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."—MATT. VII, 22, 23.

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be A CASTAWAY."—1 COR. IX, 27.

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